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Class
Book

A SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

ADDRESS OF HENRY CLAY

TO THE PUBLIC,

WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER, 1827.

EXHIBITING FURTHER EVIDENCE

IN

REFUTATION OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM,

TOUCHING THE

LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION,

MADE BY

Gen. Andrew Jackson.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY PETER FORCE, CORNER OF ELEVENTH STREET AND PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE.

1828.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In my Address of December last to the Public, in relation to the charges against me, concerning the last Presidential Election, which originated with General Andrew Jackson and some of his friends, I stated that I had been disappointed in the receipt of some testimony which I had expected; and that, if I should subsequently obtain it, I would present it to the Public. I accordingly received several statements from different gentlemen, some of which were communicated without solicitation. Deeming them highly important, I present them to the Public in this Supplement, without a single comment. I offer only the following explanation:

PART I.

Exhibits the statements of Messrs. William Sample, Isaac Bennett, the Rev. A. Wylie, John Keel, Cuthbert T. Jones, and J. U. Waring. Upon perusing them, in connexion with statements on the same subject which I formerly published, the Public will be able to judge of the accuracy of General Jackson's assertion, that "the origin—the beginning of this matter," [the charge of bargain,] "was at my own house and "fireside, where surely a freeman may be permitted to "speak on public topics, without having ascribed to "him improper designs."

PART II.

Consists of the statements of Messrs. George Robertson and Charles S. Todd, of Kentucky, and Daniel Vertner and A. W. Wooley, of Mississippi, and B. S. Forrest, of Maryland; the four former narrating conversations between other gentlemen and me, long antecedent to the late Presidential Election, in which I freely expressed my opinion respecting Mr. Adams and General Jackson. Mr. Forrest's statement prov that Colonel Benton, on his way to Congress in the

Fall of 1824, declared that "it was impossible that Mr. "Clay could vote for General Jackson, and expressed "much surprise at the suggestion."

I subjoin the statements of Colonel Benton, Mr. Plumer, and Mr. Robertson of Ohio, which have been already published, without having been previously communicated to me.; and of D. White, Esq., the only Representative from Kentucky, voting for Mr. Adams, whose statement was not contained in my former publication: Also, two letters written by me, which had escaped my recollection, and have been published by the gentlemen to whom respectively they were addressed.

H. CLAY.

WASHINGTON, 10th June, 1828.

Part I.

Statement of William Sample, transmitted in a letter to H. Clay.

"On Tuesday, the 22d day of March, 1825, when General Andrew Jackson was on his way from Washington City to his residence in Tennessee, he, with a number of the citizens of Washington, Pennsylvania, and of the county, were in the public house of Mr. Chambers, inn-keeper, West Alexandria, Pennsylvania. Mr. Edward M'Glaughlin, a citizen of Donegall township, Washington county, Pennsylvania, called at the public house of Mr. Chambers, in the town of West Alexandria, for the special purpose of seeing General Jackson. Mr. E. M'Glaughlin was introduced to the General; and, after the common salutation of shaking hands, Mr. M'Glaughlin said, "Well, General, we did all we could for you here, but the rascals at Washington cheated you out of it." To this expression, General Jackson made the following reply: "Indeed, my old friend, there was *cheatery*, and *corruption*, and *bribery* too. The Editors of the National Intelligencer were *bribed* to suppress the publication of honest George Kremer's letter." Mr. M'Glaughlin's introduction was at his own solicitation, in a public house, in the presence of a room full of gentlemen; and the conversation also in the same public house, in the presence of a large and promiscuous company. Samuel Workman, Thomas Morgan, Joseph Henderson, Josiah Trensdell, William Sample, and others. were present.

Brownsville, February 28, 1828.

Dear Sirs: Your favor has been received, and in pursuance of your request I called on Mr. Slone to obtain a certificate of the conversation that took place between him and General Jackson, which he peremptorily refused to give. Therefore, in conformity with your further request, that, in case of a non compliance, I would transmit to you the purport of that conversation delivered to me by Slone, that took place between him and the General; I, therefore, do certify, that I have heard him repeatedly observe, in substance, as follows, that he, Mr. Slone, was one of a committee that left Brownsville to meet General Jackson on his return from Washington city in 1825; that, while in his company, he observed to the General that there had been much said respecting a corrupt bargain and intrigue pending the Presidential election; that he wished to ascertain from him if there was any foundation to justify the report; the General observed that it was a delicate matter for him to treat upon. Mr. Slone assured him he was surrounded with his friends; that he might speak freely on the subject. The General then proceeded to state, that, early one morning, Mr. Clay called on him at his lodgings, which was quite an unusual circumstance, and, after a few compliments had passed, Mr. Clay observed: General, I have no doubt of your election now. The General stated, I read his heart in a moment, but replied to Mr. Clay, that, if elected, he would exercise his best judgment in executing the duties of the

office; that Mr. Clay, meeting with no encouragement, politely bid him good morning, and left the room; and, in a few days, he understood that Clay had declared himself in favor of John Q. Adams. This, said the General, Mr. Clay will not have the hardihood to stand before me and deny. The General further stated, by way of comment, that there was no doubt, had he observed to Mr. Clay, if I am elected I will do something for you, that he, Jackson, would have been the President.

ISAAC BENNETT.

Mr. R. McKee, and Alexander Caldwell, Esq.

Washington, February 15th, 1828.

Dear Sir: I received your note of the 28th ult. in which you inform me that, "by a letter just received from H. Clay he expresses a wish to obtain a statement in writing from yourself, giving, in detail, a substantial account of that portion of the conversation of General Jackson which related to himself and Mr. Adams, or, in other words, the bargain and sale story," and that "this statement is intended for self-protection only."

Your note should have been answered sooner, but that I found myself unable to bring up the conversation alluded to so distinctly to my recollection as to give it "in detail." The substance of it, even now, is all that I can pretend to give.

When General Jackson arrived at Bunland's, on his return from Congress in the Spring of 1825, the agitation of the public mind was extreme, from the belief, then prevalent, that his elevation to the Presidency had been prevented by intrigue and management on the part of Messrs. Adams and Clay. My own mind, I confess, was not altogether undisturbed on this subject, feeling, as the head of a large family, who, in the common course of nature, must share, after me, in the destinies of our beloved country, a deep interest in the preservation of its liberties, which I believed, from what I knew of the history of Republics, were not likely to perish in any popular convulsion, until the People themselves should first find their rights to have been invaded by those in power. Feeling, from the force of such considerations, a sympathy for General Jackson, I was induced, though I had no previous personal acquaintance with him, to pay him my respects.

The following dialogue took place:

A. You return, General, from a boisterous campaign.

B. Yes, Sir.

A. One in which you were not quite so successful as in some former ones.

B. My success in those to which you allude was owing to the *firmness* of the brave men whom I had the honor to command.

A. It is more honorable, however, General, to lose than to win in such a contest as that lately concluded at the Federal city, if, indeed, things were managed as has been reported.

B. And who can doubt it?

A. Why, General, one would hardly suppose that such men as J. Q. Adams and H. Clay would, in the face of the nation, engage in such a transaction.

B. But let any man, in his senses, take a view of the circumstances—let him compare, for instance, the prediction of honest George Kremer with its accomplishment.

A. But, were not the talents and local situation of Mr. Clay sufficient to justify the confident expectation of his appointment? There is, however, another circumstance which, if true, will settle the point.

B. What is that?

A. The proposition that is said to have been made to *you*—was that a fact?

B. Yes, Sir, such a proposition was made. I said to the bearer—Go, tell Mr. Clay, tell Mr. Adams, that if I go into that chair, I go with clear hands, and a pure heart, and that I'd rather see *them*, together with myself, engulphed to the earth's centre than to compass it by such means. The very next day, (or shortly after, which of the expressions it was is not now recollected) Mr. Clay and his friends declared for Mr. Adams.

Such was the conversation, as nearly as can be now recollected. It was rapid, and carried on in such a tone of voice as not to be heard by many in the room. The Messrs. Murdocks, who were present, I believe must have heard a part of it. Most of the sentences were not announced in full, but taken up and answered by the parties so soon as their drift and bearing were understood, except the last, which was pronounced emphatically. Of this, I am the more certain, as it made an impression which was, on my mind, deed and vivid.

The foregoing statement is at the service of Mr. Clay. The allegations which it contains against him and Mr. Adams, were believed by me at the time, but have, in my view, been losing their evidence in the course of public inquiry; and now ought either to be sustained by additional proof, or magnanimously abandoned; otherwise, I should think a reaction in public sentiment may be expected.

Yours, with respect,

Th: M. Giffin, Esq. A. WYLIE.

Bowling Green, Feb'y. 23d, 1828.

Dear Sir: Your note of this date has been duly received, requesting me to state whether or not, I was present at a conversation held by General Jackson, at the Washington Hall Tavern, in this town, in the month of April, 1825, when on his way from Washington; in which he made charges of bargain and intrigue, against Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay. In answer to the above inquiries, I must state that I was present at the Washington Hall on the evening after General Jackson arrived there, when on his way from Washington in 1825; and heard him conversing freely respecting Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay, and the Presidential election, in which conversation I heard General Jackson say, that he would not have the office of President of the United States, if he had to obtain it by bargain, corruption, and intrigue, as Mr. Adams had done. This was the first time I had ever heard the celebrated bargain and intrigue mentioned, which has since made so much noise throughout the United States.

Respectfully your obedient servant,

Col. Fr. Johnson. JOHN KEEL.

Bowling Green, Feb'y. 1st, 1828.

I think it was some time in the month of April, 1825, that Gen. Jackson, on his return from the City with his family, put up at the Washington Hall Tavern, in this place, and remained until the next day after breakfast. In the course of the afternoon of the day of his arrival, many citizens of the place called to see him; I then lived at the Washington Hall Tavern. He appeared to converse freely with the company who were there, upon the subject of the Presidential election. I heard him repeatedly speaking of Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay; and in speaking of the Presidential election, I understood him to say, that propositions had been made to him, (Gen. Jackson,) either by or through the friends of Mr. Clay—I do not now distinctly recollect whether it was by Mr. Clay's friends or through Mr. Clay's friends—that if he, General Jackson, would say he would make Mr. Clay Secretary of State, that Mr. Clay and his friends would vote for him, and that they would settle the Presidential election in one hour; and I further understood General Jackson, that he told the messenger that he might go back and tell Mr. Clay, that he would rather see the earth open and swallow both himself, Mr Clay, and their friends, up together, than it should be said he got into the Presidential chair by bargain, or intrigue, on his part. This is substantially what I heard the General say; though it may not be the precise words he used, it substantially conveys what he said to the company on that point.

CUTHBERT T. JONES.

Frankfort, Kentucky, March 21, 1828.

Dear Sir: Your replication to the charges so often repeated against you, of corruption, &c. in the late Presidential election, has been received in Kentucky with much satisfaction, by the friends of the present Administration, and more particularly by your well-wishers, while it has silenced a large portion of your most open-mouthed defamers.

It is a fact probably known to you, that an extraordinary effort has been made and is making in this country to rally the shattered ranks of a desperate party, upon the name of Jackson, although he has said that an honest jury would convict any man of perjury who would vote for the very measures that have in Kentucky been so warmly supported by them.

In your vindication, you refer to a conversation had by General Jackson, in Bowling Green, upon his return from Congress, after the election of Mr. Adams to the Presidency. I was present at one of those conversations, when the General observed, in speaking of the late election, that "*The people had been cheated.*" "*That the corruptions and intrigues at Washington had defeated the will of the people, in the election of their President.*" I waited until this branch of the conversation was closed, and finding no palliative, left the company, which was large, and composed of gentlemen and ladies of the first respectability, and at a public tavern; several followed, and his remarks became the subject of street conversation, in which I remarked that, as highly as I was disposed to think of the General, particularly for his military success, I could not approve such a course—that if corruption existed, and that known to him, he surely should not have been the first to greet Mr. Adams upon his elevation; and that, if

you had participated, it was his duty to have exposed it when your nomination was before the Senate.

It may be well to remark, that the General may have thought he was wholly surrounded by political friends, as he had been well received there by the citizens.

Respectfully, yours,

J. U. WARING.

H. Clay.

P. S. By a sense of duty to an injured and much persecuted man, I have been induced to address this letter to you, and you are at liberty to use it as you may think proper; I would have communicated these facts to you at an earlier period, but believing them unnecessary after the General's letter giving up Mr. Buchanan.

Part IX.

DECEMBER 17, 1827.

Sir: In the winter of 1824-5, I had frequent and free conversations with many of my friends on the subject of the then approaching election of President, by the House of Representatives.

In these, I expressed my own preference for Mr. Adams, and my confident belief, not only that he would be elected, but that a majority of the Kentucky delegation would vote for him. I felt and expressed no doubt that Mr. Clay would prefer him to Gen. Jackson. I believed that he could not support the General consistently with his feelings or principles; and in a frank conversation with him in September of 1824, I understood distinctly, that nothing could ever induce him to aid in or approve the General's election. In these views, you concurred—and referred to a conversation which you said you had had with Mr. Clay, in which he communicated to you his determination, in any event, to oppose the election of Gen. Jackson.

Indeed, before the election by the House of Representatives, I had heard no one express the opinion that Mr. Clay would or could co-operate with General Jackson's friends.

Before the election of Mr. Adams, I had ascertained satisfactorily to myself, that those of the Kentucky delegation, who voted for him, would do so: And I had been informed (and yet have no doubt that the information was true) that one of those from our State, who voted for the General, had, when about leaving home for Washington, in the fall of 1824, assured his constituents that he would not vote for General Jackson.

Respectfully,

COL. DAVIDSON. GEORGE ROBERTSON.

SHELBY, Kentucky, 18th February, 1828.

Dear Sir: Adverting to that part of your late address, in which you remark, "you have no doubt that in your promiscuous and unreserved in-

tercourse among your acquaintances in this State, others, not recollected by you, could bear testimony to the moderating and settled determination of your mind," I deem it an act of duty and of justice to inform you that a conversation, of the tendency alluded to, occurred between you, my late father and myself, at his house in Frankfort, a few days before you started from that place on your journey to Washington, early in November, 1824. I was not aware that you had it in contemplation to make a publication on this subject, or I would have long since communicated the circumstance to you.

We commenced the conversation by an enquiry of you, as to the prospects of the Presidential Election, and particularly as to the import of the latest information on an event which we regarded with great solicitude, that of your being returned by the electoral college to the House of Representatives—you were of opinion that this result would depend chiefly on the vote of Louisiana, and the relative extent of the vote for yourself and Mr. Crawford in the State of New York. Predicated on the idea of your exclusion from the House, my father enquired as to the actual and most received opinion of the state of Mr. Crawford's health, and intimated a preference of that distinguished individual on the contingency supposed, should his health be considered as sufficiently firm to enable him to discharge the arduous and complicated duties of President. You spoke of the last intelligence as to his health being very unfavorable, and concurred in the kind opinion expressed of him by my father. A comparison was then entered into as to the respective qualifications of Mr. Adams and General Jackson. My father mentioned having some prejudices against Mr. Adams, which, however, he admitted, were not of a character to impeach his patriotism or his fitness for the office, both of which were acknowledged. He expressed a desire to have a Western President, but did not think that, in this aspect of the case, we should effect this object by the election of General Jackson, as neither he nor his immediate friends could be relied on as favorable to what was called the Western policy. He regarded General Jackson—moreover, as disqualified by his temper, his education, and habits, to discharge, satisfactorily, the duties of the office of President. In these views you appeared to concur, and requested us to exert any personal influence we might have with the Legislature, in preventing the introduction or adoption of a resolution to instruct the Kentucky delegation to vote for General Jackson. You deprecated the idea as being in the highest degree embarrassing, and hoped it would not be adopted. The whole conversation impressed on my mind the firm conviction with which you seemed to be animated, that you could not, nor ought not to vote for General Jackson under any circumstances whatever. I recollect distinctly, that you foreboded the direst consequences to the country in the event of his election; that it would be an administration of fury and of violence, as had been forcibly stated by the author of an interesting pamphlet just published in New York, and to which you adverted. As contrasted with the pretensions of General Jackson, you referred to the ability and long experience of Mr. Adams in the civil affairs of the Nation, and mentioned the incident of a friendly argument with him in his office, on your leaving Washington in 1821-22, but in which you differed in opinion, as to the most suitable time to recognise the independence of the new governments South of the United States. I took occasion, here, to speak of the high praise of Mr. Adams's patriotism and abilities produced on

ney mind by the opportunity afforded of judging of them when engaged in the service of the United States abroad; which tended in a great degree to remove the prejudices imbibed from the misrepresentations of his political conduct at an early period of the Government.

In appropriate connexion with the preceding narrative, I can state the substance of a conversation of like tendency had between yourself and our venerated friend the late Gov. Shelby, at his residence, as early as the month of July, 1824. He commenced the conversation by asking what you thought of the prospects of Gen Jackson in the approaching election. You replied by stating that you did not believe he would be elected, and spoke freely and fully of his conduct and qualifications, very much in the manner you had treated of them in your public speeches—that you did not expect from him or his counsellors any friendly feeling towards Kentucky or the great Western interests, which she had so prominently supported; and that you had strong apprehensions that his Administration would be a reign of fury and of turbulence. Governor Shelby then remarked that he concurred entirely in these views, and proceeded to communicate to you, what he had never mentioned out of the circle of his immediate family, the great change effected in his mind towards General Jackson by his conduct at the Chickasaw Treaty in 1818, that the high estimation in which he had theretofore regarded the *temper*, the *discretion, judgment* and *disinterested patriotism* of General Jackson, had been greatly lessened by his conduct on that occasion. He said, his rash, hot headed temper, if it had not been restrained, would have cost the nation double the sum for which the land was ultimately purchased; and he had so permitted the integrity of his principles to be the dupe of an intrigue as to propose, on behalf of his personal friends, then present, to secure for them a reservation of the Big Spring, and a valuable tract of land around it. To this proposition, he, Governor Shelby, opposed an indignant refusal; but at length consented to its partial adoption, with the understanding that the Government should have the pre-emption right at the price stipulated. He, accordingly caused the necessary information to be transmitted to the President, who promptly accepted the reservation on behalf of the Government. In conclusion, Gov. Shelby remarked, in a tone and style peculiar to himself, that he believed there were five hundred men in the Union with stronger claims and qualifications to the Presidency than those possessed by General Jackson. From repeated and full conversations, which I had the satisfaction of subsequently holding with my revered father and my venerated father-in-law, I am persuaded that, had you voted for General Jackson, it would have greatly impaired the confidence in you, which had been implicit and exalted, and in the friendship which had been unclouded during a period of thirty years of intimate intercourse. You will concur with me in the belief, that no two individuals in the Western States, out of Tennessee, were so thoroughly apprized of the *real character and qualifications* of General Jackson as were these two departed patriots.

I have the honor to be, with great regard,

Your obedient servant,

C. S. TODD.

Hon. H. CLAY, *Washington*.

February 7th, 1828.

Mr. Johnston presents, with great pleasure, to Mr. Clay two letters from Mr. Vertner and Mr. Woolley, which he is at liberty to use in any way he may think proper.

Port Gibson, *January 10th*, 1828.

Dear Sir: I received some time ago your letter, containing a request that I would furnish a statement of observations which I heard Mr. Clay make relative to the qualifications of Mr. Adams and General Jackson, for the office of President of the United States, previous to the last Presidential election. That statement I now proceed to furnish with great pleasure:

When on a visit to Kentucky, early in the month of August, 1824, I dined at a friend's house, in company with Mr. Clay and several other gentlemen. After dinner, the conversation turned on the then approaching Presidential election, which conversation elicited from Mr. Clay the following remarks in substance: That if the House of Representatives had to decide the election between those two gentlemen, there was very little doubt on his mind as to the result, and that it would undoubtedly be in favor of Mr. Adams. He said that the House of Representatives was composed of men possessing great political knowledge and experience—that they were acquainted with the superior pretensions of Mr. Adams, and that superiority would secure his election—in fact, I recollect distinctly that he spoke in terms of high commendation of the ability, great experience, and political accomplishments of Mr. Adams; and that, for himself, he could not hesitate in giving his preference to Mr. Adams. He pronounced his objections to General Jackson with great decision and force, as entirely unfit for the situation; and such was the impression made on my mind by these remarks, that had Mr. Clay afterwards voted for General Jackson, I should have been compelled to assign him some motive otherwise than the public good.

I have now given, in substance, what I heard Mr. Clay say, according to your request, and I assure you it affords me great pleasure that the information is in my power to communicate.

I am yours, with great respect,

D. VERTNER.

Hon. J. S. Johnston, Washington City, D. C.

Port Gibson, *January 9th*, 1828.

Dear Sir: Your letter, bearing date 14th last October, I received immediately previous to my departure from Kentucky. From considerations, important to an accurate and full compliance with the request made in your letter, I was induced to delay my answer until I arrived at this place. I regret extremely the delay, as I would cheerfully, and at all times, afford any assistance in my power to exculpate the character of Mr. Clay from the false and disgraceful aspersions which his enemies have endeavored to fix upon it. I recollect distinctly the conversation to which you refer:

and shall state it to you with a full confidence in the correctness of my recollection; although some years have elapsed since its occurrence, for immediately on my arrival at this place on the 27th day of December, 1824, I stated to many of my friends, that the State of Kentucky would, in the House of Representatives, vote for Mr. Adams, and gave them as my reason, the conversation I am going to relate. I further stated to them the conversation between Mr. Clay and Dr. Drake, before the disclosure of it subsequently by Dr. Drake. My information of this conversation was obtained by me from Dr. Drake, before I left Kentucky. Those friends I have lately consulted, and their recollections correspond precisely with what I will now relate.

In the fall of the year 1824, some time previous to the departure of Mr. Clay from Lexington, for the city of Washington, I had the pleasure to dine with Mr. Clay at his own house, with a number of gentlemen, who, I believe, were generally, the political friends of Mr. Clay. The conversation was various, but generally of a political character, embracing the subjects of Internal Improvement and the Tariff. The last subject, I think, introduced Mr. Adams and General Jackson into the conversation. At length some observations were made by one of the company, on the unaccountable success (as far as information had been received,) of General Jackson, how far even beyond the expectations of those who first started him as a candidate, and that it was strongly probable Adams and Jackson would go before the House of Representatives with the greatest vote from the electoral college. Various observations were then made in opposition to the pretensions of Gen. Jackson, and many apprehensions expressed. Mr. Clay then remarked, that he felt no apprehension whatever for the election of Gen. Jackson; for, as beyond a doubt, it would be decided by the House of Representatives, he could not for a moment believe they would elect the General in preference to Mr. Adams. He then gave his reasons. They were to me sound and satisfactory. He spoke of the many opportunities of Mr. Adams, and the many important distinguished civil and political situations he had filled, and with great ability, and benefit to our country; he pronounced him an able and accomplished statesman. He spoke of General Jackson as of military reputation only; that he had given no evidence whatever of ability or learning, except in that character: in fact, from the political situations he had occupied, we had evidence to the contrary. He said the House of Representatives was composed of men of ability, political knowledge, and extended reputation, and that they would not, he felt certain, elevate a man to the highest civil situation in our country, for his military character alone. I have now given you the substance of Mr. Clay's observations at that time, and so independently and forcibly were they expressed, that no doubt was left on my mind as to the course he would take. In fact, I know positively, that his sentiments and intentions were so well known on that subject, that many of his friends, and next to him the friends of Gen. Jackson, expressed their fears of the effect the course he was going to pursue would have. This is the amount of the information I have, which I with great pleasure communicate, for I do believe Mr. Clay the most injured and persecuted statesman we have ever had, and one who has shed lustre and honor on the American character. I am yours, with great respect,

A. W. WOOLLEY.

Hon. J. S. JOHNSTON, *Washington City, D. C.*

ROCKVILLE, *Nov. 4th*, 1827.

Late in the Autumn of 1824, I met with Colonel Benton and General Brecnet, members of Congress, at Dawson's tavern, in Rockville, Maryland, on their way to Washington. I had not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with either of these gentlemen, but heard who they were from others; and afterwards, seeing them in Washington, ascertained that I was correctly informed.

It was believed by most of the persons present, that the election of a President would devolve upon the House of Representatives, and that Mr. Clay was not one of the number from which the House would be authorized to make its selection. At that moment the Presidential election was a most interesting subject of conversation, in which all present participated; there was much speculation upon the course which would probably be adopted by Mr. Clay and his friends. It was suggested by some gentleman, that Mr. Clay would vote for Gen. Jackson. I thought differently myself, and entered into some of the considerations which I believed would forbid such a vote. I was very glad to find that Col. Benton agreed with me: he declared *it was impossible that Mr. Clay could vote for General Jackson*, and expressed much surprise at the suggestion.

I had been under the impression that Col. Benton was the friend of Mr. Clay, and the conversation of the evening tended to fasten that impression on my mind.

B. S. FORREST.

Washington City, Dec. 7th, 1827.

Sir: Your letter of the 19th ult. covering the Lexington Virginia Intelligencer of that date, has been duly received, and in answer to the inquiries you put to me, I have to state that the article to which you invite my attention, is substantially, not verbally, correct, so far as it represents me as saying that I was informed by Mr. Clay, in the forepart of December, 1824, that he intended to vote for Mr. Adams. There is no mistake in the date, as a visit which I made to your part of Virginia about that time enables me to fix it with certainty. I left Washington, on that visit, about the 15th of December, and had received the information of Mr. Clay before I set out, and told it, while absent, in the family of my father-in-law, Col. M'Dowell, of your county. But the inference so much insisted upon, that I must have told the same thing to Mr. Eaton and other of his political friends, is wholly erroneous; for, having no authority from Mr. Clay to promulgate his intentions, I only spoke of them in the bosom of a private family at two hundred miles distance from Washington. Since that period, and especially during the present summer, I have, on several occasions, and sometimes in the presence of political opponents, when the course of conversation led me to it, mentioned what I knew of Mr. Clay's early intention to vote for Mr. Adams; and in this way, I came to speak of it again, some two or three weeks since, in the house of my father-in-law, where I had first spoke of it near three years ago, and whence, with some additions and variations, without the privity of any one present at the conversation, it has crept into the paper which you have sent me. No one ever asked my leave to publish what I said; if any one had, the authors

of the publication in the Lexington paper might have been spared an office which must have been inexpressibly painful to their honorable feelings, as I should not have refused to the Administration any testimony in my favor to give, notwithstanding the character of the war which the great body of their forces are carrying on against me. Yours, respectfully,

THOMAS H. BENTON.

Epping, N. H. March 18, 1828.

The charge of corruption and intrigue in the late Presidential election, first brought against Mr. Clay by a member of the House of Representatives, and there abandoned by its author, having been since given to the public, under the sanction of Gen. Jackson's name, has justly excited the attention of the people in every part of the country. The nature of the charge itself, not less than the high standing of the parties, (both the accuser and the accused,) has given to this controversy an importance which justifies every new attempt to throw light upon the subject. The late address of Mr. Clay to the public has brought to my recollection certain circumstances, which appear to me to have some bearing on this subject, and which, therefore, I shall proceed to state.

At the time of the late Presidential election, I had the honor of a seat in the House of Representatives; and my anxiety to give effect to the known wishes of my constituents for the election of Mr. Adams, did not suffer me to neglect any opportunity of informing myself, minutely, of the progress of events, and of their causes. With the friends of the several candidates, particularly those of Mr. Adams, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Clay, my intercourse was constant, intimate, and extensive. With many of them, I conversed freely and frequently on the subject; and became early acquainted with their different views and feelings in relation to it, as well as the motives by which they appeared to be influenced: and I can safely declare, that the result of all my inquiries, in respect to Mr. Clay, in particular, was a conviction, (founded on innumerable facts and indications of opinion, occurring under my own observation,) that, in this difficult and delicate juncture, his conduct was distinguished by purity of motive, by a deep sense of public duty, and great prudence and discernment in the course proper to be pursued. It was seen, from the commencement of the session, that his opinion would have great influence in the election; and the friends of Mr. Adams never suffered themselves to believe that Mr. Clay, himself an experienced statesman, bred from his youth to the civil service of the country, would throw the decisive weight of his powerful influence into the scale of a "Military Chieftain," before whom all merits and all services, merely civil, seemed to disappear. In his high office of Speaker of the House, he seemed anxious to preserve his usual impartiality between the conflicting parties; and though among his intimate friends his opinions were known, he neither obtruded them upon the members generally, nor, so far as I could observe, did he take any undue pains to conceal them.

With respect to his friends, (by whom I mean the members of Congress from those States which had voted for him for President,) it appeared to me that, generally speaking, their attachment was not to Mr. Clay as an

individual merely, but as a public man—as a statesman, whose general views of policy were in accordance with their own; and that, finding they could not make *him* President, they looked round among the candidates for the man whose views of policy nearest resembled those of Mr. Clay—particularly on the two great questions of Internal Improvement and Domestic Manufactures. This was especially the case with Ohio members; and I was expressly told by one of them, (Gen. McArthur,) that, *chiefly upon these grounds*, they had come to the determination of voting for Mr. Adams, before they had ascertained what would be Mr. Clay's course on this occasion.

It is not, however, so much the object of this communication to express my own opinion, either of Mr. Clay's motives, or of the conduct of his friends, as to exhibit evidence in relation to certain facts stated by him, in his late address to the public. In a part of that address, it is his object to show that he had, early and repeatedly, expressed his opinion that Gen. Jackson was not qualified for the Presidency; and, consequently, that he could, in no event, be expected to vote for him. To the great mass of evidence which he has there adduced, it is in my power to add the following. It was my practice, while a member of Congress, to note down, at the close of each session, in a journal which I kept for that purpose, whatever occurred to me of an interesting nature, during the session that had just closed. The first session of the Eighteenth Congress closed on the 27th of May, 1824. The following extract from this journal is under date of "June, 1824;" and was written by me immediately on my return from Washington.

"I spoke but twice, this session, to Mr. Clay, on this subject. The first was on the caucus, against which he declared himself; but professed to be governed, in this whole matter, entirely by his friends' advice. The other conversation related to General Jackson. It was soon after Pennsylvania declared for the General, and when he seemed, for the moment, to carry all before him. He spoke with equal truth and feeling on this subject. He said it was truly *discouraging* to see the People so intoxicated and deluded, by a little military glory—that a man, totally unknown to the civil history of the country—who knew nothing of the Constitution, or laws of the land—and who, in short, had no other recommendation than that which grew out of his *fortunate* campaign at New Orleans, should be thought of for President of the United States, and even preferred to all others: at a time, too, when some of the ablest men the country had ever produced, (he did not mean, he said, to include himself in the number,) men who had grown grey in the civil departments of the Government, in Congress, in diplomatic missions, and in the Cabinet, were before the public, as candidates for that office—was, he said, such a symptom of the diseased state of public sentiment, as must be equally alarming and discouraging, whether viewed by those who saw the highest objects of laudable ambition snatched from them by a military chief, or by those calmer observers of passing events, who look with philosophical, or prophetic eyes, on the causes of the permanence or decay of our free institutions."

The above extract contains but an imperfect sketch of Mr. Clay's remarks to me at that time. He declared, with great energy, his opinion, that, whatever might be General Jackson's other merits, he had no pretensions to the character of a Statesman: and he painted, in lively colors,

the dangers to which the country was exposed, from the sudden overflow of military enthusiasm, by which he was borne along. It was, he said, an *evil omen*; and one which foreboded nothing favorable to the future destinies of the Republic. I not only considered these opinions of Mr. Clay as worthy to be recorded, but spoke of them, at the time, as indicating very clearly his intention to support either Mr. Adams or Mr. Crawford, against General Jackson, should he ever be called upon to decide between them.

Recollecting this conversation, and knowing that Mr. Adams was the second choice of many of Mr. Clay's friends, I expressed, at the commencement of the next session, a very decided opinion that he would receive the vote of Mr. Clay. The state of Mr. Crawford's health disqualified him, in the view of all but his particular friends, for the office of President; and knowing, as I did, Mr. Clay's early and deliberate opinion of General Jackson's want of the requisite qualifications, I could not doubt, that, as a necessary consequence of this state of things, he would vote for Mr. Adams. The first week of the session did not pass without confirming me, very strongly, in this belief. It was on the occasion of the reception of Gen. Lafayette, by the House of Representatives. In the address made to him, as Speaker of the House, Mr. Clay dwelt with complacency on the *civil* virtues of Lafayette; and spoke of his "uniform devotion to *regulated* liberty," as commanding our "*highest* admiration." Immediately on the adjournment, I expressed to Mr. Clay my satisfaction at the preference which he had given to the civic merit of Lafayette, over his mere military exploits: and my hope that we should not soon forget this just distinction. He replied to me, that it was chiefly as the friend of civil liberty that Lafayette was admired in this country: and that it became the House of Representatives, in particular, as the guardians of our civil rights, to receive him in this, his highest character. He added, with peculiar emphasis, "You will not find me, Mr. Plumer, disposed, by *any act of mine*, unnecessarily to increase the *military fever*, which has already produced such *strange effects* among us." From the manner in which this was spoken, I could understand it no other way than as a direct answer to my allusion to the approaching Presidential election; and I drew from it the obvious conclusion, that Mr. Clay intended to vote for Mr. Adams. This was on the 10th December, 1824—the day of Lafayette's reception, as may be seen by a reference to the journals of the House. The supposed *corrupt overture* of Mr. Clay to Gen. Jackson is alleged to have been made on the 30th of the same month.

In his address to the public, p. 18, Mr. Clay says:

"If I had received the vote of Louisiana, and been one of the three candidates returned, I had resolved, at a time when there was every probability of my receiving it, that I would not allow my name, in consequence of the small number of votes by which it would be carried into the House, if I were returned, to constitute an obstacle to an election."

This statement is confirmed by the letter of Mr. Johnston, of Louisiana, to whom he made known his determination, before the meeting of Congress. It may be further confirmed by the following extract from my journal, under date of "March, 1825," written immediately on my return from the session of 1824—5.

"General M'Arthur, of Ohio, told me, that, meeting Mr. Clay one day, when it was thought that he would receive the vote of Louisiana, he told

mon that if he came into the House, it would be by so small a vote that he was afraid his friends could do him very little service there: that Mr. Clay answered, he hoped he should not be returned as one of the candidates, since it was evident that his election, if it could take place, would be contrary to the expressed opinion of a vast majority of the people; and that, if returned to the House under such circumstances, by receiving the Louisiana votes, he should think it his duty to decline the support of his friends, and use his own influence in support of one of the other candidates."

The preceding extracts appear to me entitled to more weight than any statement I could now make from mere recollection; as they were written at the time, for my use only, and with no expectation that they would ever be seen by any other person. If the facts they contain should add any thing to the just defence of an injured fellow-citizen, my object, in their publication, will have been accomplished. To stand by, in silence, and see another unjustly assailed, when it is in my power to aid in his defence, by the exhibition of facts known only to me, would, in my opinion, be little less criminal than to be myself the author of the wrong.

WILLIAM PLUMER, Jun.

Union Township, Ross County, Jan. 12, 1828.

Dear Sir. Your note of the 8th inst. has been duly received, which I take great pleasure in answering, by furnishing you with the following statement:

I left Chilicothe on the 15th of November, 1824, for the neighborhood of Staunton, in Virginia, and on the night of the 18th, I lodged at the house of Samuel Shrewsberry, on the Great Kenhawa, in company with Henry Clay, General Metcalfe, and Major David White, three of the representatives in Congress from Kentucky, then on their way to Washington. Upon ascertaining that I was a resident of Ohio, and from the neighborhood of Chilicothe, they inquired whether I could inform them how the electoral vote of Ohio had gone; and having a number of the Scioto Gazette in my pocket, which contained the official statement of the vote, I handed it to Mr. Clay. This circumstance led us into conversation, and also to an acquaintance.

The next morning the above named gentlemen and myself set out in company for Staunton, to which place we travelled during a journey of six days. In the course of our journey, I had repeated and frequent conversations with Mr. Clay, on the subject of the Presidential election, and of the probable chances of success which would attend each of the candidates who might be returned, to be elected by the House of Representatives. Mr. Clay gave it as his opinion that he would not be one of those who would be returned. And from the reported ill health of Mr. Crawford, it was not very probable that if even he were elected, he could discharge the arduous duties of President. For these reasons, he said there was little doubt but that the choice would be ultimately restricted to either Mr. Adams or Gen. Jackson; in which event, *he repeatedly stated* that it was his settled intention to vote for Mr. Adams; alleging as a reason for this determination, that he could not consent to aid in elevating a man to the Presidency who stood recommended before the people by no other

qualifications than those which were purely military. The other gentlemen, in frequent conversations with me on this subject, expressed the same opinions. On our arrival at Staunton we separated; they to go on a visit to Mr. Jefferson, and I to my friends in the neighborhood of Staunton.

If you shall believe that this statement will contribute to vindicate the character of Mr. Clay from the foul calumnies which have been cast upon it, in consequence of his vote for Mr. Adams, you have my permission to make it public. Yours, with much respect,

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

R. Kercheval, Esq. Chilicothe.

TO THE PUBLIC.

LAWRENCEBURG, February 17th, 1828.

I have witnessed with no little anxiety and astonishment, the progress of the investigation now before the public, in reference to the circumstances growing out of the election of the President of the United States, by the House of Representatives of the eighteenth Congress.

The contest between the friends of Mr. Adams and General Jackson, has indeed assumed a most extraordinary character. Parties have been formed and arrayed against each other, and are made the organs of the most bitter and vindictive denunciations against men and principles. Serious charges have been made and exhibited to the public, in every possible form, with a view to forestal public sentiment, on subjects that demand solemn and sober enquiry. The leading partisans of both the prominent candidates for the next presidential term, actuated alike by the fury of party spirit, instead of prosecuting the enquiry presented to the American people for their consideration, through those means most likely to result in just conclusions, have, to a great extent, lost sight of principle, and rest their hopes of victory and success upon the issue of a war of extermination. That party spirit and blind zeal, which knows no bounds, and is governed alone by overbearing and vindictive feelings, has superseded all rational and sober investigation, and the reputations of the best men in the nation are offered up a common sacrifice upon the altar of prejudice.

The press is no longer the sentinel and guardian of civil liberty, but is prostituted to the base purposes of giving currency to the most unfounded and infamous slanders against public and private character. Even honorable Senators, invested with special delegated powers, forgetting their own dignity and the duties they owe to their country and constituents, acting under the impulse of this political fever, and goaded on by the same mad and furious zeal, under the flimsy pretext of settling important principles, and regardless of the subjects of legitimate legislation, have formed themselves into a body, infinitely more terrible than a Spanish Inquisition, in order to whitewash their political friends, and blackball their political enemies! The sanctity of private character has been violated, and, contrary to constitutional and legal forms, the reputation of private individuals, in their absence, has been dragged before the tribunal of this self-created court of judicature, and without the means of defence, are subjected to insinuations and sneers from the lowest and most contemptible of your titled political knaves.

How far the people will sanction or reward the authors of this usurpation upon private right, is not for me to determine. Perhaps they have

already had their reward for this pitiful and cowardly service, by protracting their session at the expense of the treasury. Equally delinquent, the parties cannot expect to escape public indignation, by the crimination and re-crimination of each other.

I regret that necessity compels me at this time to vindicate myself.—Standing in the attitude I do in reference to the late election, nothing should have tempted me to appear before the public, but the indispensable duty which I owe to my own reputation; and if any apology is due from me, for making this publication, I rely for my justification upon the extraordinary and unnecessary use that has been made of my name. On all fit occasions, I have explained to my late constituents the views and motives which led me to vote for Mr. Adams. To them I have been explicit and uniform; and yet I am often made to speak facts and sentiments which I never delivered or entertained. This may be the effect of accident or of misapprehension, growing out of detached parts of the same conversation; but one thing is certain, that I never have authorized my name to be used to criminate any man or party. I have not before this written any thing on the subject; and from that circumstance, many persons believe that I am possessed of some important secret, which, if disclosed, would shed abundant light upon the matter of controversy, and hence I have alternately been the subject of censure and of misrepresentation by both parties. I have no secrets to communicate. When I gave my vote for Mr. Adams, I did it under the firm persuasion, from the information I had received through many intelligent gentlemen of high political standing within my district, that I was acting in strict conformity to the will of my constituents. That will, I shall always be proud to obey; and although the choice made may be disapprobated, yet I feel assured that my motives will not be impugned by those disposed to do me justice.

Legislative instruction had been received, it is true; but that instruction had lost its influence before it had reached its destination. It was considered, and so represented, as a kind of political juggle for effect upon local politics. So far as I have been implicated, in connexion with my late colleagues, in the alleged *management*, *bargain*, *sale*, &c. in the election of the President, and in the formation of his cabinet, I plead conscious innocence, and am willing to bow with humble submission to the award of an intelligent and just people. That my colleagues, or either of them, were guilty of the charge, cannot be established by me. I know of no impropriety of conduct or impropriety of motive, on the part of either of them, which would authorize me to attach to them the least criminality.

I shall, in the exercise of my constitutional right of suffrage, vote for the Jackson ticket, and I will support it with zeal. Any opposition I may offer to the re-election of Mr. Adams, grows out of circumstances foreign from, and entirely unconnected with, his late election by the House of Representatives.

DAVID WHITE

Washington, 4th February, 1825.

My Dear Sir: I received your obliging letter of the 1st instant. Although my letter, to which it is an answer, was not intended for publication, I would rather that it should be published, and speak for itself, than

that its contents should appear through the medium of Mr. Ritchie's representations of them. With regard to its publication, you will be pleased to do as you may think proper. All that I feel anxious about, is, that the public should not receive an impression that it was *my* intention that it should be published.

My condition at this moment is most peculiar. The batteries of some of the friends of every man who would now be President, or who, four or eight years hence, would be President, are directed against me with only the exception of those of Mr. Adams. Some of the friends of General Jackson, Mr. Crawford, Mr. Calhoun, and Mr. Clinton, with very different ultimate ends, agree for the present, to unite in assailing me. The object now is, on the part of Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson, to drive me from the course which my deliberate judgment points out, and, for the future, on the part of Mr. Clinton and Mr. Calhoun, to remove me, as an obstacle to their elevation. They all have yet to learn my character, if they suppose it possible to make me swerve from my duty, by any species of intimidation or denunciation. But I did not suppose that my old friend, Ritchie, would join in the general cry. He ought to recollect that he is struggling for a man, I for the country—he to elevate an unfortunate gentleman, worn down by disease, I to preserve our youthful institutions from the bane which has destroyed all the Republics of the old world. I might have expected from the patriotism of Thomas Ritchie, that he would have surrendered his personal predilections, and joined with me, in the effort to save us from a precedent fraught with the most pernicious consequences. I am so far disappointed—I say it with mortification and regret. But all attempts to make me unite with him—to induce me to give up the defence of our institutions, that we may elect a sick gentleman, who has also been rejected by the great body of the Nation, are vain, and utterly fruitless. Mr. Ritchie ought to awake, should be himself again, and love Rome more than Cæsar.

I observe what you kindly tell me about the future Cabinet. My dear Sir, I want no office. When have I shewn an avidity for office? In rejecting the mission to Russia, and the Department of War under one Administration? In rejecting the same department, the mission to England, or any other foreign mission, under the succeeding Administration? If Mr. Adams is elected, I know not who will be his Cabinet. I know not whether I shall be offered a place in it or not. If there should be any offer, I shall decide upon it when it may be made, according to my sense of duty. But do you not perceive that this denunciation of me by anticipation is a part of the common system between the discordant confederates which I have above described? Most certainly, if an office should be offered to me under the new Administration, and I should be induced to think that I ought to accept it, I shall not be deterred from accepting it, either by the denunciations of open or secret enemies, or the hypocrisy of pretended friends. With great respect,

JUDGE BROOKE. I am, faithfully, your friend, H. CLAY.

GENITO, April 11th, 1828.

To the Editors of the Constitutional Whig.

Gentlemen: The annexed is a copy of a letter written by Mr. Clay to a member of the Virginia Legislature, in answer to one written by that gen-

tleman to Mr. Clay, at the particular solicitation of several members who knew the friendship that existed between those two gentlemen. I have been endeavoring for the last 18 months to get Mr. Clay's letter, but in consequence of its being mislaid, I have been unable to do so until now. It goes, (together with the numerous other letters written by him pending the election) to show the high-minded and independent course adopted by him throughout that contest. I have the original now in my possession.

WASHINGTON, 4th February, 1825.

My Dear Sir: I have received and read, with all the attention due to our ancient and unbroken friendship, your letter of the 2d instant. You state that the conviction has been forced upon the Richmond public, by the papers which are daily received from this city, that "I have gone over to the party of Mr. Adams *with a view to constitute a part of his cabinet.*" Do you believe it? Then you ought not to respect me. Do you wish me to deny it? Then you cannot respect me. What do you desire?—That I should vote for Mr. Crawford? I cannot. For General Jackson? I will not. I shall pursue the course which my conscience dictates, regardless of all imputations and all consequences. I love the State which gave me birth more than she loves me. Personally I would make any sacrifices to evince this attachment. But I have public duties to perform which comprehend a consideration of her peculiar interest and wishes, and those of the rest of the Confederacy. Those I shall perform. In doing so, I may incur unfortunately her displeasure. Be it so. I cannot help it. The quiet of my conscience is of more importance to me than the good opinion of even Virginia, highly as I do and ever must respect it. Your faithful friend,

H. CLAY

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